

Miss Jane Porter as a Romantic Writer

by Cora Belle Beatty

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Submitted to the Department of English of the
University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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Beatty, C.B. 1912.



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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

No satisfactory biography of Jane Porter exists. Brief accounts occur in Elwood's Literary Ladies of England, Vol. II; Allibone's Dictionary of English Literature; and Hall's Book of Memories. The Ker Porter Correspondence, sold by Sotheby in 1852, contained materials for a biography, and was purchased by Sir Thomas Phillipps, of Middle Hill.

The Dictionary of National Biography, 1896 contains a brief outline of the events of her life, a history of the publication of her works, and a short account of the sources of her inspiration, the reception of her writings, and some comments on her character and personal appearance. It also gives a careful collection of references for source material regarding the life of Miss Porter.

Most valuable material of an autobiographical nature is to be found in the prefaces and notes which Miss Porter has written for later editions of her novels. These prefaces and notes are valuable as showing her attitude toward her works and the spirit in which they were written. They are interesting as they contain elaborate historical references and carefully cite the reader to the authority for

a great deal of the material she has used. They show Miss Porter to be a most painstaking antiquarian and also not entirely indifferent to her literary laurels, but they are especially valuable for the glimpses they give us into the heart and life of Miss Porter. At times we are taken entirely into her confidence and we see an enthusiastic little girl in the days when war was echoing on all horizons, coming nearer, and affecting the imagination more closely than happens in our day,- whose mind was fired with pity and fervent sympathy for Poland. She shared in the feeling that thrilled all England when Kosciuszko fell and Poland lost her liberty. When the great Polish general was in London weak with wounds and down fallen, Robert Porter, her brother, was taken to see him and introduced by a friend as "A boy emulous of seeing and following noble examples". He returned full of enthusiasm to tell every particular of the interview to the eager sister, who could not hear enough of this wonderful hero. She tells of often seeing in her walks other pathetic sufferers who had excited her anxious and painful sympathy. "In the days of my almost childhood,-- that is eight years before I dipped my pen in their tears,-- I remember seeing many of these hapless refugees wandering about St. James' Park. They had sad companies in the like miseries, though far from different enemies, in the emigrants from France; and memory

can never forget the variety of wretched yet noble-looking visages I then contemplated in the daily walks which my mother's own little family group were accustomed to take there." These notes also contain many interesting accounts of Miss Porter's relations with men and women of literary reputation and many of the kind and complimentary things said to her by friends and literary critics in regard to her novels. Most interesting of all they show the aged authoress looking back in her 'Retrospective Preface';- written at Shirley Park, May, 1840,- over her long life and treating her two beloved literary children with all the tenderness and jealous regard of an anxious mother. She speaks of her simple-hearted enthusiasm and the excitement, about which she wrote, caused by the nearness of the events. "Then, I wrote when the struggle for the birthright independence of Poland was no more; when she lay in her ashes, and her heroes in their wounds; when the pall of death spread over the whole country, and her widows and orphans traveled afar." These prefaces also give an insight into the beautiful family relations and home life of the Porter family and contain many interesting allusions to Jane Porter's noted sister Anna Maria and her equally illustrious brother, Robert Ker Porter.

In the Gentlemen's Magazine, No. 102, Part 11, p. 574, occurs the Obituary of Anne Maria Porter, written by Mr. J. Parks, 1832. This article is carefully prepared and contains valuable information concerning the history of the Porter family. The writer takes pains to carefully trace the origin of the Porter family to high and noble ancestors, a matter about which every true Scot is especially sensitive and in regard to which we are told the Porters were by no means indifferent. Mr. Parks also gives definite information about the death of the father William Porter, an officer in the dragoons, in 1779 and the subsequent straits of the widow and five children who were left in very poor circumstances. He tells of the careful training of the children by their wise and intelligent mother and of their intellectual and social advantages in Edinburgh, London and elsewhere. Nothing, of course, is said of Miss Jane Porter personally.

In "Harpers New Monthly" 1850, Vol. I, is a rather lengthy article entitled "Memories of Miss Jane Porter," written by Mrs. S. C. Hall who was an author and an admiring friend of Miss Porter. The article is sentimentally written containing little that is definite and reliable as history, but it is exceeding^{ly} interesting in the light it throws

on the character and characteristics of Miss Porter. This article mentions the removal of the family from Durham where, Mrs. Hall thinks, Miss Porter was born, to Edinburgh where her lively imagination found food for growth on Scottish soil. Here every castle had its story of brave knights and fair ladies and every brae had been the scene of renowned deeds of arms. In every cottage the memory of the past was kept alive, and fathers and mothers related to their children stories of Wallace and of Bruce, until the romantic past became more real than the living present. These stories Miss Porter heard every where as a child from the servants and aged people of the neighborhood. While gathering "gowans" and other wild flowers near her home she frequently encountered an aged woman with her knitting in her hand who would speak to the eager intelligent child of the blessed quiet of the land where cattle were browsing without fear of enemy and then would talk of the awful times of the brave Sir William Wallace, when he fought for Scotland against a cruel tyrant. Of course this old woman filled with tales of Sir William Wallace and Bruce the listening ears of the lively Saxon child, who treasured them in her heart and brain until they came to fruition in after years in "The Scottish Chiefs".

Mrs. Hall visited the Porters at their home at Esther-Hill in 1827 and gives a most charming picture of Miss Porter's home life. She speaks of the marked contrast

of the two sisters, Jane and Anna Maria and of the noble courtesy of Jane, who received visitors as if she were granting an audience. The effect of this soon passed away but not so the fascination which was in all she said and did. She had a soft and musical voice and there was a grace and dignity about her manner that impressed everyone. Besides these rather vague indefinite memories Mrs. Hall knows little that adds to our knowledge of Miss Porter. She is however very appreciative of her character and work.

These few references constitute the biographical material concerning Miss Jane Porter available in the Library of the Kansas University.

ROMANTIC ELEMENTS IN THE WORKS OF MISS JANE PORTER.

There are certain qualities attitudes of the mind, ways of thinking and feeling, traits of style which distinguish the Romantic school of writers from the Classic.

One of the qualities which is distinctly romantic, is an excess of sentiment, and this is a marked characteristic of Miss Porter's works. Her pages fairly teem with sentimentality, and her characters seem almost to enjoy sorrow and affliction that they may exalt the principle for which they stand. The youthful Thaddeus having received King Stanislaus' blessing and gratitude exclaims:

"Had I done more than my duty in that, such words from your majesty would have been reward adequate to my privation; but, alas! no. I have perhaps performed less than my duty; the blood of Sobieski ought not to have been spared one drop when the liberties of his country perish!" Thaddeus blushed while he spoke, and almost repented the too ready zeal of his friends in having saved him from the general destruction at Villanow." (1).

(1) All references from "Thaddeus of Warsaw" will be taken from "A New and Revised Edition", Donohue, Henneberry & Co., Chicago. 1890.

"Yes, my sovereign" replied Thaddeus; and while there remains one man on the earth who has drawn his first breath in Poland, he will bare witness in all the lands through which he may be doomed to wander that he received from you the care and affection of a father." (1).

This is also shown when Thaddeus takes leave of his native land, "Involuntarily dropping on his knees, he plucked a tuft of grass, and pressing it to his lips, exclaimed, "Farewell, Poland! Farewell my earthly happiness!" Almost stifled by emotion, he put this poor relic of his country into his bosom and remounting his noble animal crossed the bridge" (2).

"Many fell before the determined arm of the youthful king; but it was the fortune of Bothwell to encounter the false Monteith in the trains of Edward. The Scottish earl was there at the head of his intrepid Lanark men. 'Fiend of the most damned treason' cried he. 'Vengeance is come!' and with an iron grasp throwing the traitor into the midst of the faithful clan, they dragged him to the hearse of their chief, and there, on the skirts of its pall, the wretched villain breathed out his treacherous breath under the strokes of a hundred swords." "So" cried the veteran Ireland, 'perish the murderers of William Wallace' (3)

(1) Thaddeus of Warsaw. p. 100.

(2) " " " p. 103.

(3) All references from "The Scottish Chiefs" will be taken from the American reprint.

Thomas Y. Crowell & Co. New York.

Miss Porter is of the Romantic writers in her tendency toward overlavish decoration. Her heroes and heroines are too perfectly presented. Nothing that goes to make up excellency of character is wanting in her favorites. William Wallace is noble, brave, handsome; he is at once stern and immovable, gentle and full of tenderness; he is a devoted son, an inspiring friend, a matchless general, an astute statesman, a generous and forgiving enemy, a loving and devoted husband, a burning patriot. He is an avenger of injustice, a defender of the helpless, the champion of all that is good and noble and true and everlasting, courageous beyond the shadow of a doubt, absolutely devoid of malice, hatred or self-seeking. A devout Christian he possesses an open loving heart, merciful, compassionate, full of tender pity. His soul is lofty and entirely above the weakness and frailty of worldly ambitions. Subjected to the most heart breaking, discouraging soul-trying circumstances, he never for a moment doubts, loses faith or questions. He never seems to hesitate or despair nor seem capable of being tempted, but through all feels "God's in his Heaven-All's right with the world." If William Wallace wanted any virtue it was only because Miss Porter failed to notice it. That he was absolutely without a sense of humor must show that she was also without it. One and all, whoever comes into his presence, even his enemies themselves, are compelled to pronounce Sir William

Wallace "the most virtuous of Men". (Thaddeus of Warsaw, Vol. I, p. 91.)

The Romanticists had a strong sense of color and a feeble sense of form. Miss Porter's Scottish Chiefs is an excellent example of this. She has many fine passages, strong and well presented, scenes capable of arousing interest and holding attention; she is capable of exciting the emotions and of carrying one for a time on a wave of enthusiasm, but there are so many such passages without any definite order or aim, that they become at last bewildering.

She has the Romantic tendency to give attention to details at the cost of the main impression. Miss Porter is so well equipped with material, so rich in thought and so thoroughly at home with the life and situations that she is setting forth, that this resourcefulness detracts in some slight degree from the impression as a whole. She knew Scottish history, Scottish life, Scottish topography and in her zeal to give her readers a vivid impression might possibly be thot to overshoot the mark.

The Romanticists have been said to have a constant tendency to run into the exaggerated, the fantastic, the grotesque, the fanciful, the wildly extravagant, and the chimerical. In these tendencies Miss Porter does not indulge to any great extent. She may at times be said to be extravagant and fanciful, never grotesque or chimerical.

For example the successful undertaking of Lady Mar disguised as the Knight of the Green Feather in order to demonstrate her love for Sir William Wallace is highly extravagant in its conception and improbable in its accomplishment. Highly improbable also is the fortunate and timely discovery by Thaddeus of Warsaw that his beloved friend and benefactor is in reality his own father and that he is his eldest son and heir,—"Wretch that I have been! Oh, Sobieski! I am thy father, dear, injured son of the too faithful Therese." The first words which carried this avowal to the heart of Thaddeus deprived it of motion, and when Sir Robert expected to receive the returning embrace of his son, he found him senseless in his arms."

(Thaddeus of Warsaw. p. 383.)

In her treatment of death Miss Porter will be seen to be decidedly romantic. Death to the classic nations was neither sacred nor beautiful; they abhorred the thoughts of death and decay and sought to conceal it. They loved life and light. But for the romantic writers death had a morbid fascination; they loved to dwell upon it. There was a perpetual mystery and wonder about death that made it attractive to the romantic mind. In "Scottish Chiefs" the influence of the dead is ever with the living. The spirit of the departed Marian is always before William Wallace, the inspiring and guiding influence in his life. Death is treated by Miss Porter in as exquisite and at the

same time masterly way. Her treatment of it is always effective and reverential- as, for example, the death of the beautiful young wife of William Wallace.

The bier lay before the altar. The prior of St. Fillan, in his holy vestments, stood at its head; a band of monks were ranged on each side. The maids of Lady Helen in mourning garments, met their mistress at the portal. They had wrapped the beautiful corpse in the shroud prepared for it; and now having laid it, strewn with flowers, upon the bier, they advanced to their trembling lady, expecting her to approve their services. Helen drew near- she bowed to the priests. One of the women put her hand on the pall, to uncover the once lovely face of the Murdered Marian. Lady Helen hastily resisted the woman's motion, by laying her hand also upon the pall. The chill of death struck through the velvet to her touch. She turned pale; and waving her hand to the prior to begin, the bier was lowered by the priests into the tomb beneath. As it descended, Helen sunk upon her knees, and the anthem for departed souls was raised. The pealing notes, as they rose and swelled, seemed to bear up the spirit of the sainted Marian to its native heaven; and the tears which now flowed from the eyes of Helen, as they mingled with her pious aspirations, seemed the balm of paradise descending upon her soul." (Scottish Chiefs. Vol. I, p. 64.)

The same appears again in the horrible scene, where in the night, William Wallace discovers the old servants wailing the strains of the coronach over the shrouded corpse of his murdered grandfather, Sir Ronald Crawford, and where receiving the head in his arms while an awful silence pervades the room, he dedicates himself anew to his country. At length he looked around on his friends with a countenance whose deadly hue gave a sepulchral fire to the gloomy denunciation of his eyes. "Was it necessary," said he, "to turn my heart to Iron that I was brought to this sight?" (The Scottish Chiefs. Vo. II, 214.)

The corpse of Sir William Wallace is brought to the battle field of Bannock burn. "There stood the sable hearse of Wallace, and the royal standard, struck deep into the native rock of the ground, waved its blood-red volumes over its sacred head." (Scottish Chiefs. Vol. II, p. 334.) Its presence inspires the Scots to victory. After the battle it is taken in due solemnity to the chancel of Cambuskenneth, while the whole train followed in speechless woe. The standard of Scotland is placed upon the pall, as it rested on the steps of the altar and in its presence three important transactions take place, Robert Bruce is crowned king of Scotland, Isabelle and Bruce are united in marriage, and Lady Helen having been borne in on a litter, dies resting her clasped hands on the coffin.

With the advent of the romantic movement came a new treatment of Nature. The classicists were utterly lacking in their appreciation of country life. They had no genuine love of the freshness and lawlessness of wild nature. Nature with them must conform to the type. Their Pastorals were simply pedantic imitations of classical models, and enthusiasm or rapture over wild and rugged loveliness simply bored them. The daisy, the rose, and the lily were not lovely in and of themselves but only as they fitted into Flora's vernal wreath.

The Romanticists on the other hand gloried in the wild, the boundless, and the sublime. The very grandness, mystery and incomprehensibleness of the wild and rugged appealed to them. They loved it because they could not understand it. It is in this that Miss Porter shows her^{self} most clearly to be of the Romantic school; as shown by the following:

"But Murry, who remembered once having explored them with his father, led promptly forward by a steep rough road in the side of the mountain. As they clung to the slippery road which over hung the lake, its mists dissolved into a heavy shower, and by degrees clearing away, discovered the shining heads of Ben Lomond and Ben Chochan."

"The party soon entered a precipitous labyrinth of craigs; and passing onward, gradually descended amid pouring torrents and gaping chasms overlaced with branching trees, till the augmented roar of waters intimated to Murray they drew near the great fall of Glenfinlass. The river, though rushing on its course with the noise of thunder was scarcely discerned through the thick forest which groaned over its waves. Here towered a host of stately pines; and there, the lofty beeches, birches, and mountain-oak bending over the flood, interwove their giant arms, forming an arch so impenetrable that while the sun brightened the tops of the mountains, all beneath lay in deepest midnight." "The awful entrance to this sublime valley struck the whole party with a feeling that made them pause. It seemed as if to these sacred solitudes, hidden in the very bosom of Scotland, no hostile foot dared intrude." (Scottish Chiefs. Vol. I, p. 126.)

To Miss Porter, Nature had life, feelings, aspirations of its own. She attributes to the very lochs and vales of Scotland a mute longing for freedom, a pensive appeal for their native birthright.

"The moon shone as the party rode forward. Wallace ascended the steep acclivity on which Roslyn castle stands. ----- A deep shadow lay on the woods beneath, and the pensile branches of the now leafless trees, bending

to meet the flood, seem morning the deaths which now polluted its stream. The water lay in profound repose at the base of these beautiful craigs, as if peace longed to be an inhabitant of so lovely a scene."

(Scottish Chiefs. Vol. II, p. 209.)

There are few descriptions of wild scenery, in all literature, more effective than the description of the Highlands of Scotland as they appeared to Robert Bruce returning after some years absence.

"The day, which had been cloudy, suddenly returned to wind and rain, which certainly spread an air of desolation over the scene very dreary to an eye accustomed to the fertile plains and asure skies of the south. The whole of the road was rough, dangerous and dreadful. The steep and black rocks, towering above their heads, seemed to threaten the precipitation of their impending masses into the path below.----They ascended a mountain whose enormous piles of granite, torn by many a winter tempest, projected their barren summits from a surface of moor-land, on which lay a deep incrustation of snow. The blast now blew a tempest, and the rain and sleet beat so hard that Bruce, laughingly declared he believed the witches of his country were in league with Edward, and, hid in a mist, were all assembled here to drive their lawful prince into the roaring cataracts beneath.----- They had hardly arrived there before the rain ceased, and the clouds rolling away from the sides

of the mountains, discovered the vast and precipitous Ben Varlich. Its vase was covered with huge masses of cliffs scattered in fragments like the wreck of some rocky world, and spread abroad in wild and horrid desolation. The mountain itself, the highest in this chain of the Campians, was in every part marked by deep and black ravines, made by the rushing waters in time of floods; but where its blue head mingled with the clouds a stream of brightness issued that seemed to promise the dispersion of its vapors, and consequently a more secure path for Wallace to lead his friend over its perilous heights."(Scottish Chiefs.Vol.II,199.)

Descriptions of such beauty and strength are not rare to Miss Porter's pages. She has a fine sense of locality and of individuality of landscape. She loved a scene not so much because of its historical significance or association, but because of the direct appeal of its grand ruggedness to her unfailing sympathy and boundless imagination.

In her ability to present scenes of natural beauty she is in no respect inferior to Walter Scott; and she is far superior to him in her judgment as to the extent to which descriptions of natural scenery should be introduced. She never uses the brush simply to show her skill.

Another characteristic of the Romantic school shown in Miss Porter's works, is the glorification of humble life. The classic writers had given a brilliant picture of the surface of society, but not the elemental passions of the

human heart.

Though the Scottish Chiefs are the dramatis personae of her novel and receive her main attention, it is never forgotten that behind all of the action the great cause and motive is to be found in the demand for freedom by the sturdy men of Scotland. The cause of the common people is the bugle that calls William Wallace to the service of his country, and the one supreme joy of his life was that he had been able to restore to them their lands and homes. Miss Porter saw and felt the beauty and dignity of the Scotch character.

"With these words he descended the mound and mounted his horse, amidst the cries and tears of the populace. They clung to his garments as he rode along; and the women with their children, throwing themselves on their knees in his path, implore him not to leave them to the inroads of a ravager; not to abandon them to the tyranny of their own lords, who, unrestrained by a king or a regent like himself would soon subvert his good laws, and reign despots over every district in the country. Wallace answered their entreaties with the language of encouragement, adding that he was not their prince, to lawfully maintain a disputed power over the legitiment chiefs of the land. "But" he said, "a rightful sovereign may yet be yielded to your prayers; and to procure that blessings. Daughters of Scotland, night and day invoke the Giver of every good gift."

(Scottish Chiefs. Vol. II, p. 100.)

She never forgets that Scotland is alive with actual living men and women. Whenever the Scottish peasant appears, he is no mere puppet or painted figure but a sturdy individual full of purpose and conviction. If it can be said of Walter Scott that he had an intense local feeling; that the attachment to place was a passion with him, surely it can be said of Miss Porter that humanity was her passion. She loved human life, she saw and felt the throb of it everywhere. Her love of the grand and beautiful in nature, her intense enthusiasm over the success and brilliancy of military encounters and even her feeling of hero worship, boundless and extravagant as it is, are all inferior to her love and interest in the poor of Scotland whose homes are destroyed and whose hearts are bleeding. When she speaks of them we get a glimpse of the sweetest and best of Miss Porter.

"The plaintive voice of the Highland pipe at that moment broke upon his ear. It was the farewell of the patriot Linsay, as he and his departing company descended the winding paths of Craignacokeilg. Wallace started on his feet. The separation had taken place between his trusty followers and their families, and guessing the feelings of those brave men from what was passing in his own breast, he dried away the traces of his tears, and once more resuming the warrior's cheerful look, sought that part of the rock where the Lanarkmen were quartered." (Scottish Chiefs. Vol. I, p. 144.)

This is also shown to be a strong motive in "Thaddeus of Warsaw". "The bosom of the benevolent Stanislaus bled at the dreadful picture of his people's sufferings, and hardly able to restrain his tears, he answered the animated exordiums of Sobieski for resistance to the last with an appeal immediately to his heart.

'What is it that you urge me to do, my lord?' said he. 'Was it not to secure the happiness of my subjects that I labored? and finding my designs impracticable, what advantage would it be to them should I pertinaciously oppose their small numbers to the accumulated array of two empires, and of a king almost as powerful as either. What is my kingdom but the comfort of my people? What will it avail me to see them fall around me, man by man, and the few who remain bending in speechless sorrow over their graves? Such a sight would break my heart. Poland without its people would be a desert, and I a hermit rather than a king.'

(Thaddeus of Warsaw. p. 73.)

There is a warmth and color about her treatment of human life which is in marked contrast to the cold reserve of the classic writers. They are always calm and self-possessed while she becomes enthusiastic, even excited.

The love of solitude is also a feature of Romanticism. The Classicists did not love to isolate themselves from conventional social life and come face to face with the world of mystery and spiritual reality. They loved to

think on the clear, the transparent, the well known. They delighted in noise, bustle, color, stir and action and did not care to penetrate too far into the mysteries of life. They had no use for contemplation, musing, dreaming, and detested obscurity and mystery. In times of trouble or perplexity they rushed to find out what others thought, what others had done under like difficulties, anything rather than think it out alone.

Miss Porter's characters, on the other hand, instinctively seek seclusion when subjected to trying experiences; in the depth of the forest at midnight, in the seclusion of their own chamber, or in the gloomy sacred halls of the chapel they solve their problems and reach their own conclusions.

"William Wallace, seeing that honor had dried the tears of regret, left them to their repose, He sent Edwin to his rest and himself, avoiding the other chieftains, retired to his own chamber in the tower."(Scottish Chiefs.Vol.I,p.145.

It has been said that the spirit of revolt and individualism was common to all romantic writers. They all proclaimed the freedom of the individual, the revolt against type. With the classicists life was confined to the common experience of average men. The abnormal individual was compressed into the mould of type. They believed that wild nature should be transformed into the regularity of geometrical design and they placed reason and common sense like two

stern inquisitors over imagination and enthusiasm.

About the middle of the 18th Century a great impression was made on contemporary writers by the reading of such works as Macpherson's "Ossian", Collins' "Ode on the Superstitions of the Scottish Highlands", Beowulf, Nebelungen Lied, Iceland Sagas, Grey's translation of Welsh and Norse, and similiar productions of old heathen Europe. Men saw that the best of life was not to be found in the stale centers of civilization, but on the frontiers where there was less convention, and where human nature might range as wit and fancy willed. "Romanticism means self expression." Miss Porter recognized the importance of the individual. She was thoroughly subjective and is strongly contrasted to Sir Walter Scott in this respect. Scott was objective almost to a fault while her characters however sentimentally overdone they may be, have a strong individuality, a personality that cannot help make itself felt. The Scottish Chiefs are each individualised and treated as real men. William Wallace is again and again compelled to stand entirely alone, going often counter to the best judgment of his friends and the reader. His feelings are peculiarly his own and are not sentiments and fashions thrust upon him. Thru all his varied and often impossible experiences, he appears a consistent and unified individual.

In the trying scene in the council hall of Sterling, Wallace defends himself thus:

"'Acknowledgment of guilt!' cried Wallace with a flush of God-like indignation suffusing his noble brow, 'If any one of the chiefs who have just spoken knew the beat of an honest heart they would not have declaimed that they heard no voice proclaim the integrity of William Wallace. Let them look out on yon carse where they saw me refuse the crown offered by themselves which my accuser alleges I would yet obtain by their blood. Let them remember the banks of the Clyde, where I rejected the Scottish throne offered me by Edward. Let these facts bare witness for me; and, if they be in sufficient look on Scotland, now, for the third time, rescued by my arm from the grasp of a usurper. That scroll locks the door of the kingdom upon her enemies.'" As he spoke he threw the capitulation of Berwick upon the table. It struck a pause into the minds of the lords; they gazed with pallid countenances, and without a word, on the parchment where it lay, while he proceeded; 'If my actions which you see do not convince you of my integrity, then believed the unsupported evidence of words, the tale of a woman whose mystery, were it not for the memory of the honorable man whose name she once bore, I would publicly unravel;- believe her and leave Wallace naught of his country to remember but that he has served it and that it is unjust.'" (Scottish Chiefs. Vol. II, p. 238.)

Dr. F. H. Hedge speaking of Romanticism said, "The essence of Romance is mystery". -- "The influence of Christianity deepened fondness for mystery, suggesting something beyond the world of sense. The essence of romanticism is aspiration." Miss Porter is a Romanticist in that a strong religious sentiment is felt throughout her writings. She regarded authorship as a sacred duty and took her work very seriously. An entire disregard of worldliness pervades her pages. Her characters are the most heavenly-minded of beings, cherishing nothing but the holy aspirations, animated only by the noblest, loftiest of ambitions. They are almost melancholy in their goodness and are full of deep emotions and spiritual longings. They have a lack of healthy vigorous force that would become a true Christian in such stirring times. Lady Helen Mar is an example of her morbidly religious individuals.

One one occasion when she has questioned the Hermits use of 'Salvation', he replied:

"This is to be free; this is to be virtuous; this is to be happy; this is to live the life of righteousness, and to die in the hope of immortal glory. Say, then, dear daughter, if, in praying for the liberty of Scotland, I said too much in calling it her salvation?' 'Forgive me, father,' cried Helen, overcome with shame at having questioned him. 'Forgive you what?' returned he. 'I love the holy zeal which is jealous of allowing objects, dear

even to your wishes, to encroach on the sanctuary of heaven. Be ever thus meek, child of the Church, and no human idol will be able to usurp that part of your virgin heart which belongs to God.' Helen blushed. 'My heart, reverend father,' returned she, 'has but one wish,- the liberty of Scotland; and, with that, the safety of my father and his brave delivers.'"(Scottish Chiefs. Vol. I, p. 122.)

In speaking of Lady Helen, Bruce and her cousin Edwin Ruthren use the following language.

"Bruce,---in a lowered voice asked Edwin some question relative to the spirit in which Helen had parted with him. 'In loosing her,' added he, 'my friend and I feel but as part of what we were. Her presence seemed to ameliorate the fierceness of our war councils, and ever reminded me of the angelic guard by whom Heaven points our way'-- 'I left her with looks like the angel you speak of,' answered Edwin; 'she bade me farewell upon the platform of the eastern tower of the castle. When I gave her the parting embrace she raised herself from my breast, and stretching her arms to heaven, with her pure soul in her eyes, she exclaimed, "Bless him, Gracious God! bless him and his noble commanders! May they ever with the prince they love, be thine especial care." ' Her prayers,' cried Bruce will fight for us. They are arms will be fitting the virgins of Scotland to use against its foes'. -- ' without such action,' rejoined Wallace, looking to that heaven she had invoked, 'The warrior may draw his steel in vain.'" (Scottish Chiefs. Vol. II, p. 203.)

There was a marked difference between the Romantic and Classic writers in the treatment of their subjects. The Classic writers emphasized clearness above force, raiment above body, brilliancy above depth. They avoided difficult themes, and believed in presenting their subjects as naked as possible and in bright light. This gives a sense of completeness and clearness, but at the same time an impression of hardness, shallowness and levity.

Miss Porter's works are not examples of technical perfection, yet they have a glow of spirit and a richness of suggestion. She gives one series of impressions, but also a feeling of indefiniteness and incompleteness. She interests you in what she has not written.

Among the charms of the Romantic writers are freshness, spontaneity, and unconsciousness. The Classic writers on the other hand were artificial, monotonous and painfully conscious. They worked for outward form and beauty rather than for the expression of soul. Miss Porter is pre-eminently an idealist. She wrote because her heart was full. In regard to her work "Thaddeus of Warsaw", she writes, "She had not, indeed, written it with any view to publication; but from an almost resistless impulse to employ the ideas and impressions with which her heart and mind were then full. It was written in her earliest youth; dictated by a fervent sympathy with calamities which had scarcely ceased to exist. and which her eager pen sought to portray; and it was given to

those who might feel with her, with all the simple hearted enthusiasm which saw no impediment when a tale of virtue or of pity was to be told." Miss Porter allows her theme to take entire possession of her and determine the style of her writings.

It has been said that the essence of Romanticism is the weird and supernatural. The weird does have some slight fascination over Miss Porter but she never employs the supernatural. She allows her sick and mortally wounded to die and not be miraculously revived by magic potion and ~~not~~ her characters, once buried, are dead. Her novels are to a fair degree free from the harrowing experiences which infest the pages of the Gothic Romance which had no slight influence over Scott. She does employ the Hermit's cell, the secret trap door, the disguise as page or minstrel, not for themselves, however, but as the best way out of her difficulty. Miss Porter's works look backwards toward the Gothic romance in a slight degree, but they also point forward to the historical novel.

"The genius of the antique drama was statuesque, and that of the romantic picturesque," says Schlegel. Miss Porter is almost unparalleled in the success of her picturesque effects. Take for example the burning of the Barns of Ayr with Sir William Wallace in the flaming rafters, or the capture of Dunbarton Castle, or the scene where ~~in~~ William Wallace falls into the hands of his enemies, betrayed by the treacherous Monteath.

(Scott makes use of this scene in his poem, Rokeby.)

" A moment told him enemies were around. Seeing him rise they rushed on him with imprecations, His eyes blazed like two terrible meteors, and with a sudden motion of his arm he seemed to hold the men at a distance, while his God-like figure stood a tower in collected might. Awe-struck they paused; but it was only for an instant. The sight of Edwin, now starting from his sleep, his aghast countenance while he felt for his weapons, his cry when he recollected they were gone, inspired the assassins with fresh courage. Battle-axes, swords, and rattling chains now flashed before the eyes of Wallace. The pointed steel in many places entered his body, while with part of a broken bench which chanced to lie near him, he defended himself and Edwin from this Merciless Host. (Scottish Chiefs. Vol. II, p. 283.)

The scene wherein William Wallace takes vengeance upon the cowardly and guilty Heselrigge for the murder of the defenceless Lady Wallace at Ellerslie, is also very effective,- "Here slept the governor. These opponents being slain by the first sweep of the Scottish swords, Wallace hastened onward winged with twofold retribution. The noise of battle was behind him, for the shouts of his men had aroused the garrison and drawn its soldiers, half naked to the spot. He reached the governor's door. The sentinel who stood there flew before the terrible warrior that presented himself. All the mighty vengeance of Wallace blazed in his face and seemed to surround his figure with terrible splendor.

With one stroke of his foot he drove the door from its hinges and rushed into the room. What a sight for the now awakened and guilty Heselrigge! It was the husband of the defenceless woman he had murdered, come in the power of justice, with uplifted arm and vengeance in his eye."

(Scottish Chiefs. Vol. I. p. 46.

When Romantic fiction began to fall into decay, out of its ashes sprung the historical novel. Very little history was read or known in England before the middle of the 18th century. Hume, Robertson and Gibbon, by ushering histories into the libraries, furnished historical novel writers with material, and furnished the historical novel readers with the appetite and knowledge necessary for their enjoyment. Without a more or less distinct criticism of history, it is impossible for a historical novel to exist. There is no material for it. This absence of a distinct, full, and tolerably critical notion of history was what the 18th Century supplied. Yet it is doubtful if the historical novel could have come about without the additional stimulus of the Romantic movement. When the early romantic writers had aroused curiosity and interest ~~and interest~~ in the life and manners of former times the Historical Novel was inevitable; and the first examples of the typical historical novel are to be found in Miss Jane Porter's "Thaddeus of Warsaw," 1803, and "Scottish Chiefs," 1810.

Miss Porter was well equipped for the writing of a historical novel. She was a careful scholar and had a passion for the past and possessed brilliant historic imagination. From childhood, she had been storing her mind with the history, legends, and ballad poetry of the Scottish borders.

Miss Porter was a tireless antiquarian; she employed every means possible to throw light on the time or place of which she wrote, read every available book, consulted every source of information possible and even traveled through the countries themselves. Miss Porter had that quick sympathy and vivid imagination that enabled her to realize that the people who lived in the 14th Century were living, breathing people, that deep in the hearts of men, lies a love of home, and country, which are vital requirements of the historical novelist. She is above all else a patriot, and no writer has quite equaled her in presenting the mighty sorrow which throbs in the hearts of all people for the loss of their national life. The key to Miss Porter's success as an historical novelist was her intense love of freedom. She is the champion of the oppressed. Sympathy for the wronged and hatred of the oppressor are the ~~dynamo~~ which gives the spark of fire to her novels. And when everything has been said in regard to her amateurish plots and inability to read character, her power of presenting history cannot be denied. Although her treatment of history is highly romanti-

cised it is still history. Her story is subservient to and depends upon the actual political and national events. However, interesting may be the incidents and details of adventures, it is the historical background that is the prominent thing. History flows thru her novels like a mighty, onrushing stream. "The Scottish Chiefs" is the first historical novel in which ~~an~~ author made diligent research in order to give a truthful representation of the times.

HISTORY OF CRITICISM OF MISS PORTER'S WORKS.

Miss Porter it seems, has consulted almost every work extant founded on the transactions of England and Scotland during the period of her narrative; the list of her authorities is numerous, and therefore omitted:-- Tradition has offered her much assistance; and for the most essential information she is indebted to her invaluable friend Mr. Thomas Cambell,--- When employed in tracing the characters of the different personages introduced into the annals of Scotland, it gave her infinite pleasure to find those virtues in the fathers which have attached her to their posterity.---- The Authoress professes to have used a greater number of agents, in conducting her plan, than she would have adopted had it been merely a work of the imagination,-----Desirous of adhering to historical truth as far as possible, few wholly imaginary persons are introduced; and she has avoided committing the least intentional injustice against the characters of the individuals who were the real actors with the hero of the tale, who is thus introduced in the second page of the first volume.-----Other private occurrences are interwoven with the political acts of the times, to prevent the unpleasant monotony which attend the narration of many warlike achievements. She had intended to add many historical notes; but, finding they would considerably enlarge the work, she therefore assures her

readers they are seldom let "to any spot in Scotland whither some written or oral testimony respecting (her) hero had not previously conducted (himself)".----The reader of this article will not be surprised that we decline the development of a tale extended to five volumes; we shall therefore, conclude our notice of "The Scottish Chiefs" with an extract, calculated to excite the curiosity and approbation of the publick:-- "Wallace stood on the cliff like the newly-aroused genius of his suffering country. His long plaid floated afar, and his glittering hair, streaming on the blast, seemed to mingle with the golden fires (the Aurora Borealis) which shot from the heavens. Wallace raised his eyes: a dash, as of the tumult of contending armies, filled the sky; and flaming and flashing steel, and the horrid echo of battle, streamed from the clouds upon the hills."

(Gent's Mag. No. 80, pt. 2, p. 345, 1810)

Miss Porter has no wit, she invariably bungles a picture of the conversation of ordinary persons whenever she attempts it. Why does she delight in unfolding the forward weaknesses of the female heart, and making even Mary Beauford love first? Yet with all her deficiencies she is interesting; never failing to excite our sympathy, though she cannot rank with our Fieldings or Smolletts. She infinitely surpasses the insipid frock of

"The mob of Gentlemen, who write with ease."

-Carlyle, Thomas, 1815, to R. Mitchel, March 25; Early Letters, etc., by Norton, p. 16.

"Thaddeus of Warsaw" and the Scottish Chiefs" are as widely known as any books of their class in the language. They are read by every school-boy and school-girl in the sentimental period of their life, and call forth a ^{al}perenni/ outburst of tears or enthusiasm. Neither work is distinguished for historical accuracy or profound insight into human nature. Yet the two are unique, and will be read and enjoyed by each successive generation of youth by reason of their sweet style and sentiment.

-Hart, John S. 1872, A Manual of

English Literature, p. 537.

Abound in striking scenes, and are written in an animated style, but display little knowledge of life, or discrimination of character. - Davies, James 1873, English Literature from the Accession of George III to the Battle of Waterloo. p. 144.

The first successful attempt at this kind of writing was made by Miss Jane Porter in 1810. "The Scottish Chiefs" is the story of the heroic William Wallace related with some animation and many pleasing details. But the style is artificial and declamatory, and, as a picture of Scotch manners of the fourteenth century, the work is by no means trustworthy. The many picturesque descriptions, and the interest which the story awakens regarding the fate of the hero, has made the book a favorite, especially among the

younger class of romance readers, and has, despite its many faults, placed it among the classics of our language-

Baldwin, James, 1883. English Literature and Literature Criticism, Prose, p. 177.

But none of these so struck the popular taste as Thaddeus of Warsaw and the Scottish Chiefs,----These lofty romances delighted the primitive and simple minded public, which as yet knew nothing of Waverley. It is possible that with a little modernising, they might still excite and charm the reader of the Family Herald, sated with more modern splendour and mystery. To our critical eyes now-a-days, the all accomplished Thaddeus looks like a little wax-work hero; but it will be hard to find in all our over abundant romances of the nineteenth century so fine a gentleman, so disinterested a lover, an individual so certain to do what was right and best in every possible Combination of circumstances. Count Thaddeus Sobieski has never any questionings with himself as modern heroes use- he never has any doubt how to act in an emergency. The splendour of his exploits and the depth of his misfortunes take away our breath. When he is introduced into London drawing-rooms as a poor teacher of languages, his conduct is as sublime in his humiliation as it was princely in his prosperity. No heart of woman could resist this union of qualities; and accordingly we find his path strewn with sighing ladies of the first fashion to whom he behaves with an exquisite grace as well as a chivalrous honour, which secures their life

gratitude, even when he has to repel their advances.

-Oliphant, Mrs. 1886. Literary History of England.

Jane, although writing less than her sister, and beginning her literary work later in life, is much better known and loved by us, because her works accord with the spirit of the times in which she lived- Rutherford, M. 1890.

English Authors, p. 317.

It was "The Scottish Chiefs," by Miss Porter, a work that was destined to create within me a new want, and to turn my thoughts to the reading and study of history--- Its influence is still with me. I read the book by stealth, concealing it under my text book during school hours, when my quiet attitude led my teacher and others to suppose I was absorbed in study.

-Lamb, Marcha J. 1891, Formative Influences,

The Forum, Vol. II, p. 54.

The success of the book was immense. Kosciuszko sent his portrait and a medal to the author; she was made a member of foreign societies, received gold crosses of honor; and oddly enough, even from America there came, under the guiding providence of Mr. John Harper, then believe Mayor of the City of New York, an elegant carved arm-chair, trimmed with crimson plush, to testify "The admiring gratitude of the American people." To the author of "Thaddeus of Warsaw." The book, by its amazing popularity

and by the entertaining way in which it marshalls its romantic effulgencies in favor of a great cause, may very naturally suggest that other, later and larger enlistment of all the forces of good story-telling, which - fifty years thereafter- in the hands of an American lady (Mrs. Stowe) contributed to a larger cause, and with more abiding results. "The Scottish Chiefs" has less of gusto than the Polish novel- and as I took occasion to say when we were at that date of Scottish history- is full of bad anachronisms, and of historical untruths. Yet there is a good bracing air of the Highlands in part of it, and an ebullient martial din of broadswords and of gathering clans which go far to redeem its maudlin sentiment.

-Mitchell, Donald G., 1895, English Lands

Letters and Kings, Queen Anne and the Georges, p.283.

Thaddeus of Warsaw" long cherished by our great-Grandfathers, and not entirely forgotten to our fathers had some faint merit. - Gasse, Edmund, 1897, A Short

History of Modern English Literature, p. 299.

Jane Porter sent to school to Joseph Strutt would have been a rival to Sir Walter Scott. - Cross

Wilber L., 1899. The Development of the

English Novel, p. 144.

We can justly call Sir Walter Scott the father of the Historical novel and Waverley published in 1814, the first

typical example. True enough there were others earlier in time. The Recess published 1783, by Miss Sophia Lee, Gordez. The Monk in 1805, by S. W. Ireland. The Borderers in 1812. Thaddeus of Warsaw and Scottish Chiefs 1803, 1810, by Miss Jane Porter. Of them all "Scottish Chiefs" and "Thaddeus of Warsaw" alone are really claimants. These are tales and only less typical than Waverley.

- Stoddard, Francis H. 1902. Evolution of the English Novel.

"Jane Porter 1776-1850- to whom Sir Walter Scott told stories of witches and warlocks when she was a little girl, became the author of two excessively popular romances. Thaddeus of Warsaw in 1803 and the Scottish Chiefs, 1810, which gave her fame throughout the whole of Europe, and, in spite of their stilted artificiality are not yet forgotten. She was one of the gifted children of an Irish Officer, whose widow came to Scotland and brot up her family in an atmosphere of Romantic culture. Jane Porter died, unmarried at Bristol on the 24th of May 1850." "Miss Porter reproduced Scott's historical effects in a kind of chromolithography , but not without some dashing merit and design" - Gosse, Edmund, 1904.

Garnett and Gosse. English Literature. Vol. IV.

"The romances of Jane Porter were a great improvement over any imaginative treatment of history that had yet appeared. The first of the four volumes of 'Thaddeus of Warsaw' (1803) is almost wholly historical, having as subject those heart rending events that gather around the partition of Poland in 1793, and as hero Kosciuszko under another name. The Polish battle scenes are introductory to a picture of the Polish refugees roaming about in London in poverty and distress. The romance is spoiled in its last volumes by Wertherized domestic scenes; and its plot is amateurish and impossible. For writing "The Scottish Chiefs" (1809), Jane Porter was better equipped. She had lived in Edinburgh, was familiar with the Wallace and Bruce traditions, supplemented her knowledge by reading the fine old Scotch poem, the 'Bruce', by John Barbour; and- what no other romancer had ever thought of doing- she visited the places she had planned to describe. She had assimilated too the spirit of chivalry in the 'Arcadia' and the 'Faery Queen'. There is no melodrama in romantic fiction that holds the attention more closely than the capture of Dunbarton Castle, or the scene in the council hall at Sterling, when Wallace pushes his way through the angry and treacherous chiefs."

Cross, Wilbur L., 1907, Development of the
English Novel. p. 113.

None of the historical romances of the period have been recently republished, except Jane Porter's, which may be found in the Oxford Series. New York. -- Cross, Wilbur L., 1907. The Development of the English Novel.

to-day smile at the enthusiastic style, but Miss Porter speaks with no more enthusiasm than did the poor folks from whom she heard the story. As long as enthusiastic youth love an unblemished hero, "The Scottish Chiefs" will be read. It is impossible to analyze those early impressions or to test their truth. One can only remember them with gratitude. Jane Porter has, however, taught the youth of other lands to reverence Scotland's popular hero, so that the mention of his name awakens a thrill of pleasure, and the hills and glades associated with his deeds glow with the light of romance. --Whitmore, Clara, H., 1910. Womans Work in English Fiction. p. 145.

It is to Miss Porter's fame that she began the system of historical novel writing which attained the climax of its renown in the hands of Sir Walter Scott. And no light praise is it that she has thus pioneered the way for the greatest exhibition of the greatest genius of time.

She may parody Bishop Hall, and tell Sir Walter,

"I first adventured- follow me who list,
And be the second Scottish novelist."

Fraser's Magazine.

"Wallace, in 'The Scottish Chiefs,'- which, through a rich variety of interesting imaginary adventures, conducts a character of most perfect virtue and heroism to an effecting and tragical end- is a romance deservedly popular."- Joanna Baillie.

"She has, however, added attributes which neither pertain to the times nor to the hero-----She has drawn him with a hand much too soft and gentle" Allen Cunningham; Biog. and Crit, History of the Literature of the Last Fifty Years.

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